

Dear Sirs,

Age discrimination, until recently, did not find itself listed alongside its more heralded brethren, Race, Religion, Ethnic and Gender. This is not to say that there are no victims of age discrimination until recently. My experience with it took place 25 years ago.

I separated from active duty as a pilot in the Air Force in June, 1973. The airlines were hiring in large numbers and I was acutely aware of the unwritten policy of ALL the major airlines not to hire pilots beyond their 30th birthday, regardless of their fitness or experience. In early July of the same year, OPEC was created, quadrupling the price of Jet Fuel and sending the airlines into a mad dash to cut costs. All hiring stopped. Thousands of pilots were laid off. I had taken a job with a small commuter airline while I waited for better times. They were slow in coming. When, at last, they arrived, I was too old to take advantage of them. I was 33.

Now I find myself again the victim of discrimination. This time, ironically, it is the Federal Government which is the perpetrator. The Age 60 Rule (14CFR 121.383) came into being after the FAA took part in a fraudulent, deceitful and unethical collusion with the major air carriers of the time. There is no evidence, medical or otherwise, to support the exclusion of pilots over age 60 from being allowed to ply their trade. ALPA supports this rule because the bulk of their membership are trying to protect a Fat Cat culture which allows for a very attractive retirement program for those who attain 25 years with the SAME airline and reach age 60. Not all of us are that fortunate. Some came late to the table because their other airline(s) turned out to be the Enrons and Worldcoms of the industry. Eastern, Pan Am, Braniff, etc. Good companies once upon a time, before corporate greed manipulated them out of business. I was with Pan Am when Flight 103 exploded over Scotland. There was no recovering from that. We all thought the Fed would bail us out. They didn't.

There are many pilots who have been victimized by passed transgressions regarding age discrimination, acts of terror, corporate greed and mismanagement, who will not achieve enough longevity with his current airline to get anywhere near a full retirement. These pilots, myself included, need the extra productive years to bring the equation more into balance. Stop the deceit. Grant the pending exemptions to the Age 60 Rule and work toward extricating this discriminatory rule altogether.

Thanks for your consideration. JG